




Speech By
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

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ADJOURNMENT

Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service; Convention Centre

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.38 pm): The member for Cairns has jumped on the bandwagon to demonstrate his mock outrage at Tony Abbott's \$50 billion cuts to health funding across the nation. When the Premier decided to rip \$3 billion out of the Queensland Health system, what did we hear from the member for Cairns? Nothing! When \$20 million was ripped away from the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service this financial year, what did we hear from the member for Cairns? Nothing! When more than 230 staff were axed in the health district because of the Newman government's reckless program of cutting and slashing, what did we hear from the member for Cairns? Nothing! The member for Cairns even tried to claim that last year's budget saw a real health funding increase of 3.5 per cent in Far North Queensland, when in reality it was less than the rate of inflation and population growth at 4.5 per cent. And what has the member for Cairns said against the planned sale of strategic health land at Edmonton under this Newman LNP government? Nothing!

The Treasurer has now admitted in relation to the so-called funding cuts under the former federal Labor government that it was just a 'parameter adjustment'—not a cut, but a 'parameter adjustment'. Those are the same so-called cuts the member for Cairns used as a smokescreen for Newman government cuts, about which the health minister issued 15 misleading media statements. And how many media statements has the health minister issued in relation to the \$50 billion being ripped away from health funding under the Abbott government? None, zilch, zero, nada!

The dishonesty and hypocrisy of the member for Cairns and this Newman LNP government is laid bare for all to see. Now they are all feigning outrage at Tony Abbott, looking for another excuse for their failure to stand up for health services. The Newman government inherited the lowest elective surgery times in the nation from the previous Labor government. Those opposite have been out there crowing and taking credit for the former federal Labor government's \$3.4 billion National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospitals. This funding agreement delivered infrastructure that significantly improved emergency department response times across our state.

The previous Labor government delivered crucial projects such as the \$454 million redevelopment of the Cairns base hospital, which added new intensive care capacity in 2012 to improve emergency department response times. The member for Cairns will try to take credit for these Labor achievements, while simultaneously blaming Labor for the method by which those upgrades were funded. Federal Labor supported the previous Queensland Labor government's hospital building program, which was the biggest hospital building program in the nation.

Now, Tony Abbott has cut those health funding agreements and it has the Premier worried, because it will ruin the only good news story he has had to tell about continued improvements in waiting lists for dentistry and surgery, all on the back of Labor initiatives. The Premier is now seeing what the rest of the country has known for some time. Without Labor's initiatives, he will not be able to maintain this record and he will not be able to blame anyone but himself.

I put on the record how disappointed I am to hear that, after the Australian Tourism Exchange in Cairns, people have been concerned about a lack of convention centre capacity. We know absolutely that if the \$150 million Cairns entertainment precinct had gone ahead and not been stopped by people like the current member for Cairns and others, we would have the capacity we needed and would not have ended up in that position. Shame on them for cutting a project we needed at a time we needed it most!